

55% of adult Americans have home broadband connections

There was no growth in broadband adoption among poorer families or blacks, while growth was strong among rural residents, older Americans, and those in households earning \$20,000 to \$40,000

Washington, DC – Some 55% of all adult Americans now have a high-speed internet connection at home, according to a May 2008 survey conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The percentage of Americans with broadband at home has grown from 47% in early 2007 and 42% in early 2005. Among individuals who use the internet at home, 79% have a high-speed connection while 15% use dialup.

The 17% growth rate from 2007 to 2008 represents is comparable to the 12% growth rate recorded in the 2006 to 2007 timeframe. However, several groups exhibited little or no growth in broadband adoption at home from 2007 to 2008:

- Among adults who live in households whose annual incomes are less than \$20,000 annually, home broadband adoption stood at 25% in early 2008, compared with 28% in 2007.
- Among African Americans, home broadband adoption stood at 43% in May 2008 compared with 40% in early 2007.

“The flat growth in home high-speed adoption for low-income Americans suggests that tightening household budgets may be affecting people’s choice of connection speed at home,” said John B. Horrigan, Associate Director of Research at the Pew Internet & American Life project and author of the report. “Broadband is more costly on a monthly basis than dial-up, and some lower income Americans may be unwilling to take on another expense.”

Nonetheless, several groups exhibited strong growth in home broadband adoption from 2007 to 2008, namely:

- **Older Americans:** Those age 50 and over experienced a 26% growth rate in home broadband adoption from 2007 to 2008. Half of Americans between the ages of 50 and 64 have broadband at home. Some 19% of those 65 and older had home broadband access as of April 2008.
- **Lower-middle income Americans:** Those with household incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000 annually saw broadband penetration grow by 24% from 2007 to 2008. Some 45% of those in that income range reported having broadband at home in April 2008.
- **Rural Americans:** 38% of those living in rural American now have broadband at home, compared with 31% who said this in 2007, or a growth rate of 23% from 2007 to 2008.

While broadband adoption for low-income Americans has been flat, many broadband users show a willingness to pay more for broadband in order to get faster speeds. Some 29% of home broadband users say they subscribe to a more costly premium broadband service in order to have a faster home high-speed experience. A few even have fiber optic connections at home – 2% of broadband users say they have fiber at home.

The Pew Internet study also explores the reasons why many Americans – either dial-up users or non-internet users – do not have high-speed internet connections at home. Among the 10% of Americans (or 15% of home internet users) with dial-up at home:

- 35% of dial-up users say that the price of broadband service would have to fall.
- 19% of dial-up users said nothing would convince them to get broadband.
- 14% of dial-up users – and 24% of dial-up users in rural America – say that broadband service would have to become available where they.

Overall, 62% of dial-up users say they are not interested in switching from dial-up to broadband.

Americans who are not online – 27% of adults who do not use the internet – are likely to be older (their median age is 61) and have low incomes. When non-internet users are asked why they don't use the internet, here is what they say:

- 33% of non-users say they are not interested.
- 12% say they don't have access.
- 9% say it is too difficult or frustrating.
- 7% say it is too expensive.
- 7% say it is a waste of time.

“Economic factors play a large role in why some people don't have broadband, but about one in ten non-broadband users say that service isn't available where they live,” said Horrigan. “Beyond price and availability, some non-broadband users simply don't see the need for having a high-speed connection at home.”

Other key findings from the survey are:

- **Price of service:**
 - Broadband users report an average monthly bill of \$34.50 for high-speed service, 4% lower than the \$36 reported by broadband users in December 2005.
 - Dial-up users report a monthly bill of \$19.70 for service, an increase of 9% over the \$18 figure reported in December 2005.
- **Always connected users:** Some 34% of online users say they have gone online away from home or work using a WiFi connection on their laptop: Among this group:
 - 64% say they use free WiFi services when they do this.
 - 58% use WiFi in public places such as an airport or coffee shop.

The Pew Internet Project's report on broadband adoption is based on the Project's April-May 2008 survey of 2,251 adults, 1,153 of whom were home broadband users. The Pew Internet Project is an initiative of the Pew Research Center, a nonprofit “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. Pew Internet explores the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, the work place, schools, health care and civic/political life. The Project is nonpartisan and takes no position on policy issues.

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